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# Recovering lost learning from COVID-19 induced education disruption: A review of government strategies



## (i) UNESCO-UNICEF-World Bank Survey on National Education Responses to COVID-19 School Closures

- National education responses to school closures related to the COVID-19 pandemic
- 4 waves of data collection: May - June 2020 (some 120 countries), July - October 2020 (118 countries), February - April 2021 (143 countries), April – May 2022 (166 countries)

## (ii) UNESCO-IEA Responses to Education Disruption Survey (REDS)

- First study on the effects of the pandemic using large, random probability samples providing cross national comparative data
- Data collected between Sep 2020 - Sep 2021 from 11 countries in Africa (4), Asia (2), Arab region (1), Europe (3), and South America (1)

## (iii) UNESCO mapping/tracking of global high-stakes exams

- National measures for managing high stakes assessments and exams during COVID-19
- Data collected from secondary sources for 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years (161 countries and territories)

# Evolution of country responses: An overview

Pandemic phase/Situation	Key challenges	Policy measures taken	Emerging concerns
<i>[Outbreak of pandemic-2020]</i> Mass school closures	Systems were unprepared for teaching and learning from distance	Adhoc policy measures, e.g. cancellation/postponement of high-stakes exams, introducing alternative ways for recognizing and validating student learning	- Importance of student health, well being and safety - Learning gaps and losses
<i>[Vaccination started-1<sup>st</sup> half 2021]</i> School reopening	Increased inequality and dropout	- Adjusting the school calendar - Adapting the curriculum - Organizing online/hybrid learning - Providing financial, psychological support	How to keep track of what students have/have not learned
<i>[2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> dose of vaccination-2<sup>nd</sup> half 2021-early 2022]</i> Partial closures of schools, hybrid delivery of education	- Student disengagement - Widening gaps in learning progress - Learning losses were real	More proactive and integrated approach to organizing and assessing student learning including organizing remedial/catch up programmes, strengthening digitalization of and in education	Proven strategies for effective scalable learning recovery
<i>[June 2022 - now]</i> Opening of new schoolyear	Scale and longer-term impact of learning losses	Strategies that will amplify the systemic effects of learning recovery for transforming education	New and additional resources and capacities required to ensure learning recovery to be effective, equitable and sustainable

# Which strategies for what effects?

Intended effects/results	Strategies	Country examples
Changes to the student flows	Repetition for the entire academic year Re-enrolment of dropouts	Kenya
Maximizing the learning time	Extending the school year Cancelling/shortening the school breaks Streamlining/synthesizing the curriculum	Tajikistan, Papua New Guinea Canada [Ontario], India [Odisha], Philippines
Adapting the curriculum	Reduced/condense curriculum Reorienting the curriculum to align with children's learning	India
Compensating for missed/lost learning content	After- or before-school programmes Tutoring Remedial/Catch-up lessons	Philippines Hungary, Netherlands, United Arab Emirates,
Understanding learning needs	Diagnostic assessment Formative assessment	Antigua and Barbuda, Honduras, the Cayman Islands, Kenya, Benin
Enabling factors	Prioritizing, training and supporting teachers Emphasizing social emotional learning	Mozambique

## Approaches for learning recovery – Formal education setting

**Remedial programmes:** These programmes generally target learners who are attending formal learning programmes, but have comparatively more learning difficulties than their peers and are struggling with one or more subject areas. The intervention is therefore more individualized. It is provided in the form of additional targeted support, concurrent with regular classes, to help build learners' confidence.

**Catch-up programmes:** These short-term transitional education programmes are designed for children and youth who were actively attending school prior to an educational disruption. The programmes provide them with the opportunity to catch up on the content missed because of the disruption, supporting their re-entry into and continuation of the education programmes.

## Approaches for learning recovery – ‘Alternative’ education settings

**Accelerated education programmes (AEP):** These flexible, age-appropriate programmes are considered a form of alternative schooling and are run in an accelerated time frame, based on the ‘accelerated learning’ principles. They generally target disadvantaged, overage or out-of-school children and youth – particularly those who missed out on school or had their education interrupted owing to poverty, marginalization, conflict or crisis

**Accelerated learning programmes (ALP):** Such programmes are based on the accelerated learning principles, which focus on completing learning in a shorter time frame, while ensuring learning is not just faster, but also deeper and more effective. As opposed to AEP, they have the same end point as a formal education system, but reach it in less time. The approach therefore focuses on a condensed curriculum, teaching only the most essential knowledge and skills at any given level

**Bridging programmes:** These short-term, targeted preparation courses support students’ success. They take various forms, such as language acquisition and/or exploiting existing differences between home and host education curricula and systems, to allow entry into a different type of certified education

# The evidence – Empirical studies

## Summer learning loss (Cooper et al., 1996)

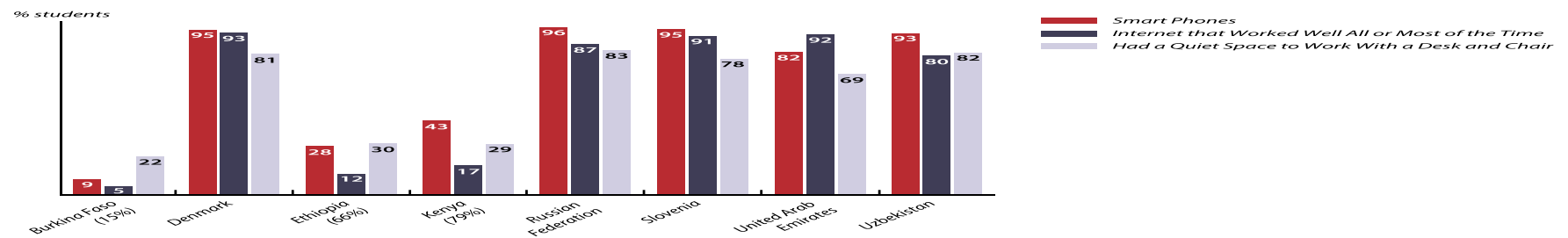
- ✓ substantial increases in the length of the school year, coupled with corresponding curriculum adjustments, could have a positive impact on student learning;
- ✓ summer programmes may be effective in facilitating academic remediation, enrichment or acceleration;
- ✓ modified school calendars may have a small positive impact on student achievement, and a more noticeable impact on the achievement of disadvantaged children

## Long-run learning impact of the COVID-19 (Michelle Kaffenberger, 2020)

- ✓ Remediation combined with long-term reorientation of curriculum to align with children's learning levels fully mitigates the long-term learning loss

# The evidence – Highlight from REDS

- Student and teacher well-being should be a priority for intervention during school closures and into the future
- Targeted intervention is needed to support the most vulnerable students, who:
  - are from low socio-economic backgrounds
  - have special needs
  - do not speak the same language as the language of instruction
- Schools play an important role in education recovery. Safety, resilience, and inclusivity must be the core goals of all schools moving forward
- While technology can help lift the learning condition and progress, it is equally importantly to ensure students are provided with adequate resources and a decent physical space to study at home

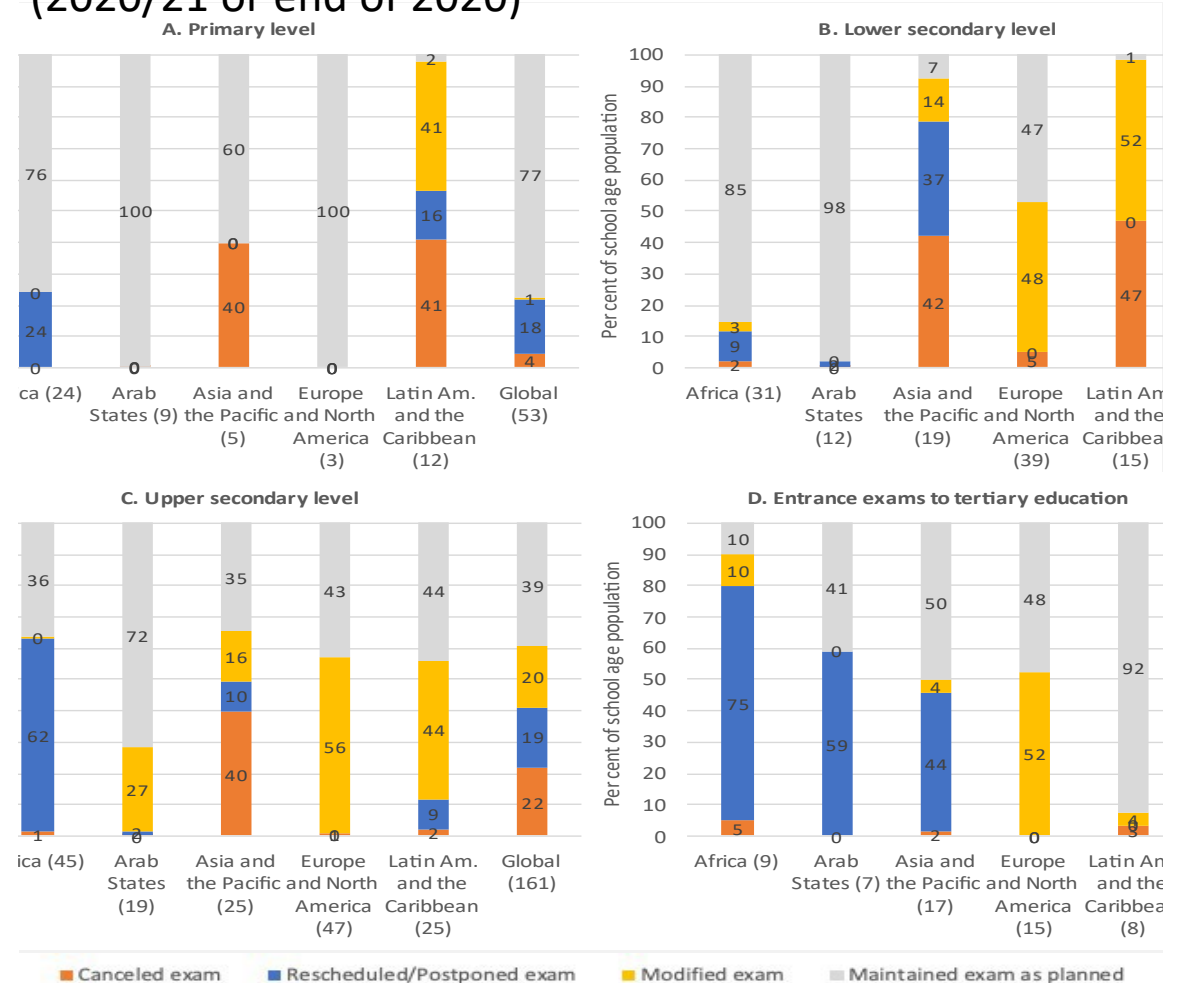




# The evidence – Highlight from tracking of high-stakes exams

**Maintaining and cancelling exams are likely the two policy options that had the largest scale impact on students**

Share of students and adopted policy responses to high stakes exams, by level of education and UNESCO region (2020/21 or end of 2020)



# RAPID framework for learning recovery



REACH



ASSESS



PRIORITIZE



INCREASE



DEVELOP



Contextually adaptable



Evidence based



Be able to get students back to their pre-pandemic learning trajectories



Also support social emotional learning and overall well being

Equity and inclusion should drive all aspects of recovery efforts

A compact of strategies, grounded in and aligned with the sociocultural context of learners, is needed

Due consideration to the level and locus of intervention, system vs. classroom level

Instructional strategies used to compensate for students' lack of prior learning by attempting to fill in their knowledge gaps while keeping them in their age-appropriate grade level have not been effective. In contrast, strategies that provide targeted and personalized instruction and support, such as the condensed curriculum, micro-teaching, and supplemental and/or differentiated instruction will work much better.

# Thank you

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LE Thu Huong  
Section of Education Policy, Education Sector, UNESCO  
h.le-thu@unesco.org



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